

## Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AF-04

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R 021709Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1503

INFO DIA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2666

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, PINR, AG

SUBJ: NEW COMMANDER OF THIRD MILITARY DISTRICT

1.DURING VISIT TO WILAYA OF BECHAR NOVEMBER 27-29, PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE PRESIDED OVER CEREMONY INSTALLING LT. COL. SALIM SAADI AS COMMANDER OF THIRD MILITARY DISTRICT WHICH INCLUDES ALGERIAN-SPANISH SAHARAN BORDER AND SOUTHERN PORTION OF ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN BORDER. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, FORMER COMMANDER COL. MOHAMED ZERGUINI AND HIS DEPUTY LT.COL. ABDELLAOUI ABDELKADER ARE TO BE REASSIGNED.

2. LT. COL. SAADI IS NEW FACT IN TOP MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE. HE HAS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TWO YEARS AT FRENCH ECOLE DE GUERRE.

3. COL. ZERGUINI, 54, HAS REPUTATION AS CLOSE CONFIDANT OF BOUMEDIENE AND TOUGH, ENERGETIC COMMANDER. DESPITE IMPORTANCE OF THIRD REGION, THOUGH, HE HAD REPORTEDLY BECOME INCREASINGLY DISSATISFIED WITH LIVING IN BECHAR, OUT OF MAIN STREAM, AND HAD REQUESTED BOUMEDIENE TO ASSIGN HIM ADDITIONAL DUTIES. ON THAT BASIS, HE WAS APPOINTED SOME MONTHS AGO AS PRESIDENT  
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OF ALGERIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AND CHIEF COORDINATOR OF MEDITERRANEAN GAMES TO BE HELD IN ALGIERS NEXT SUMMER.

INCREASING WORKLOAD AS GAMES DRAW NEARER MAY BE ONE REASON  
FOR HIS RE-ASSIGNMENT, BUT WE BELIEVE THERE IS MORE TO IT.  
DECISION TO REPLACE COMMANDING OFFICER OF MOROCCAN AND  
SAHARAN BORDER AREA WHILE SAHARAN PROBLEM STILL UNRESOLVED,  
FACT THAT BOUMEDIENE HIMSELF PRESIDED TRANSFER, REMOVAL  
OF DEPUTY COMMANDER AT SAME TIME AND UNUSUAL STEP OF  
PUBLICIZING MILITARY COMMAND CHANGE IN LOCAL PRESS ALL  
SUGGEST A DEGREE OF OFFICIAL DISSATISFACTION WITH  
ZERGUINI'S PERFORMANCE. WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHETHER HE  
WILL RECEIVE ANOTHER MILITARY ASSIGNMENT.PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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